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SCHOOL DAYS.

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TO DETERMINE WHETHER PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION IS "DIFFERENT" IN INNER CITY, SUBURBAN, AND RURAL ENVIRONMENTS, THIS OBSERVATIONAL PILOT STUDY UNDERTOOK TO DEFINE TEACHER AND PUPIL PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATION OF SCHOOL. A FIRST- AND A SIXTH-GRADE CLASS IN EACH OF THE THREE ENVIRONMENTS WAS OBSERVED IN DEPTH, WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ASKED TO RESPOND TO FIVE QUESTIONS ON WHAT THEY CONSIDERED AN "IDEAL STUDENT." ONLY SIXTH-GRADE DATA WERE USED (FIRST GRADES WERE HARDER TO DIFFERENTIATE, EITHER BECAUSE FEWER LEARNED PATTERNS OR SIMILAR TREATMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN BY TEACHERS). SCHOOL RECORDS SHOWED STUDENT BACKGROUND, APPARENT ABILITY, AND ACHIEVEMENT DIFFERED PREDICTABLY (RURAL AND INNER CITY STUDENTS APPEARED LESS ABLE AND/OR LESS EFFECTIVELY EDUCATED, SUBURBAN STUDENTS WERE MOST HOMOGENEOUS, INNER CITY AND RURAL SIXTH GRADES SERVED AN OLDER AND WIDER AGE RANGE, INNER CITY INTELLIGENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT SCORES WERE MOST VARIABLE). INNER CITY PUPIL ATTITUDES PROVED NEGATIVE--SUBURBAN, POSITIVE AND RURAL, PASSIVE. ALTHOUGH ALL THREE TEACHERS WERE COMMITTED TO THEIR WORK, ALL REINFORCED BEHAVIOR ALREADY THERE, AND EACH CLASSROOM WAS NEGATIVE AND DAMAGING IN SOME RESPECTS. THE INNER CLASS HAD A CUSTODIAL ATMOSPHERE, THE SUBURBAN CLASS SEEMED "PREP," AND THE RURAL CLASS WAS ONLY BEING EDUCATED FOR RURAL LIFE. THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN "AMONG THE PEOPLE--ENCOUNTERS WITH THE POOR." BY BASIC BOOKS, 404 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016, IN 1968. (AF)

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SCHOOL DAYS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Among the requirements imposed on young people in our society is formal education, usually through the public schools. Such phrases as "universal free education" may obscure the fact that school is often a different experience in different classrooms, schools, and areas. "Common sense" and our own educational experience confirm the existence of such differences on an idiosyncratic basis. One teacher may seem "harder," "nicer," or "better" than another. Some schools appear more friendly and relaxed than others, some school systems maintain higher academic standards than others, and the like.

We might also expect to find characteristics that tend to be common to inner-city or slum schools in contrast to schools in more "privileged" urban or suburban neighborhoods, and rural schools seem likely to be different from both. Many observations have, in fact, been made to the effect that slum schools tend to be dirty, overcrowded, largely custodial institutions where most pupils "do their time" without learning much. Suburban schools are frequently characterized as tense and highly competitive. The movement toward consolidation of rural schools reflects the observation that they tend to be too small to provide adequate educational resources and stimulation. It seems worth asking whether such apparent differences are real and, real or not, the extent to which they are reflected in the ways teachers and pupils alike perceive school and its expectations. Some recent, tentative findings in this area are reported below, along with hypotheses about possible consequences for youngsters in school.

The project was undertaken as an observational pilot study of one first and one sixth grade class at each of three schools serving an "inner city," a suburban, and a rural district respectively. The discussion that follows is based on a preliminary work in the sixth grade classes only. For several months, the two participant observers made frequent, independent visits to the classrooms involved and recorded their observations in depth. In addition, it was felt that an indication of how pupils and teachers perceived the setting and its demands could be obtained from their own descriptions of a (real or imaginary) "ideal pupil" in their classroom. Therefore, each student in the sixth grade classes studied was asked to respond in writing to the following five

questions about his concept of the ideal or "perfect" student in his class:

1. What kind of student is he or she? How does he act?

2. If he learns well, tell me what he does in the classroom that helps him do this.

3. Is he liked by most other students? If so, why? If not, why?

4. Do you think he was this way when school started this year, or has he improved as the year has gone along? Explain.

5. How many students in this class are like the student you are describing, if any?

The teachers responded, also in writing, to questions that were essentially similar but with appropriate differences in wording. These "essays," along with the observational data and background material from school records, provided the basis for the material that follows.[1]

Downtown Elementary and Briar Hill Elementary (all names are pseudonyms) are both part of the same medium-sized urban school system. Downtown, however, is many years old and serves a predominantly lower-class, inner-city population while Briar Hill is almost new and serves an affluent neighborhood on the edge of the city. Brookville Elementary School is located about thirty miles away in a small, rural community. Of course, since only one classroom representing each "condition" was studied, idiosyncratic factors related to school or classroom may have influenced the results. It was felt, however, that this exploratory effort was warranted to help guide future study of the situations faced by pupils and teachers in inner-city, suburban, and rural school settings.

Information available form school records demonstrates that pupils' backgrounds, apparent ability, and achievement differed predictably in the three schools.[2] Table 1 summarizes available data on age, intelligence test scores, achievement test scores, and parental education and occupation. Gross differences between Briar Hill and the other two schools are immediately evident.[3] It seems apparent that pupils at Downtown and Brookville are less able, or are being educated less

effectively, or both, at least in terms of the goals implicit in the test scores reported. Further attention will be given below to the apparent goals and motivation of schools and pupils as well as to questions of pupil ability and educational effectiveness. Finally, there were no nonwhite pupils in the class studied at Brookville, one at Briar Hill, and about six (under 20 per cent) at Downtown.

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Table 1 about here

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Based in part on the observers' impressions, it was anticipated that the inner-city school, Downtown, would be the most heterogeneous, but this expectation was not fully supported for the variables reported in Table 1. Most striking, perhaps, is the homogeneity within the class studied at Briar Hill, which apparently reflects the school's grouping practices. The composite scores for the two sixth grades at Briar Hill give a better picture of the children the school serves, but the particularly high-achieving, homogeneous class is the one to which reference is made in the remainder of this paper. There does seem to be a tendency for the two lower income schools to serve not only older sixth graders but also a wider age range. Intelligence and achievement scores also seem to reflect somewhat greater variability at Downtown than at the other two schools. The apparent heterogeneity in occupational status at Briar Hill may be partly a function of differential discrimination at the high and low ends of the scale, but it seems also to suggest that suburbia may be less homogeneous than some have thought.[4]

The atmosphere of each school is described below and illustrated with edited and sometimes condensed excerpts from the observers' field recordings. The excerpts were selected as much to convey the tone and feel of each school as to document the points that are made, and space does not permit specific documentation of every statement. Rather, the material is viewed as providing a basis for the selection of dimensions and the building of hypotheses for more systematic study. In the final section of the chapter, an attempt is made to draw the material together and to suggest some possible directions for subsequent work in the same area.

Downtown Elementary School

On the edge of the center-city business district, excavations mark the route of the unfinished section of an interstate

highway through the city. Just beyond is an old neighborhood where large frame houses, many of them dull and dingy-looking, are packed closely together. The area seems to be a relatively stable, largely Italian, working-class section, with a few Negro families who may be newcomers from the nearby ghetto. The school --a large, dirty, overcrowded, old building--appears, in contrast to most of its surroundings, to be in good repair. Most of the pupils come to school on foot. They are usually greeted with little enthusiasm by teachers who seem to know what will happen today because it happened last week, last year, and the year before that. To the teacher, life is not very exciting--even boring, perhaps--but work is never fun and teaching does carry some prestige in addition to almost a living wage. These attitudes are reflected physically in the antiseptically clean hallways and relatively messy and colorless classrooms. The atmosphere is gloomy, almost institutional, seemingly unchanging.

The observers seem to be a threat but inescapable, since they have the approval of the central administration. To resist them actively might make waves "upstairs"--probably better to live with them. Although the teachers seem concerned at first lest they be evaluated, perhaps a deeper worry is that such projects may eventually lead to change. In any case, the prevailing apathy soon overcomes anxiety, and the observers seem to be largely ignored.

A basic dichotomy appears quickly. The teacher establishes the "official" rules and the youngsters respond. Many of the youngsters observe a conflicting set of unofficial rules, and the teacher perceives his response to these as one of his major functions. Hardly a cooperative venture, education in this classroom proceeds largely through teacher-pupil competition, except at clearly contrasting "social" times. The pervading feeling is one of negativism and even belligerence, and not on the part of the youngsters alone.

Among the forty-one pupils (later thirty-five) in the class, three behavioral groupings seem to emerge. Some youngsters tend to be nonparticipants, apparently passively rejecting the situation by spending the school day slouching, looking out the window, and occasionally sleeping. The teacher usually ignores these children, as they do him, and rarely calls on a any of them. If they are asked to respond, they tend to do so poorly, if at all, but no o n e seems to mind.

> During a math lesson, Mr. Howard called on one girl with the comment, "I haven't had you to the board in

five years." He handed her a piece of chalk and indicated in a friendly way that she should put the next example on the board. When she got to the front of the room, she returned to her desk to look at her book again. The teacher said, "Take a good look," but he stopped her when she attempted to bring her book with her to the board. She looked at the page again, and many of her classmates began to snicker. "Give her a chance," the teacher said, and he helped her put the problem on the board. She was not able to complete it, however, and another child was called to come up and finish.

Other youngsters are busily engaged in a variety of seemingly extraneous and often disruptive activities. One may be writing on his arm, some are playing with toys or their pens, a few communicating with one another in various ways, and so forth. The teacher feels he must control them and show them who is "in charge" by stopping the "bad" behavior, using open-ended or indefinite threats as his sanctions.

During a social studies test, Mr. Howard read a question that the class apparently had not expected. They groaned and began to protest, but he replied, "Don't tell me you haven't heard of this before because I know that you have, and you'd better write an answer!"

The teacher said, "Go back and do the bulletin board. The first time you make a mistake and talk . . ." and he snapped his fingers.

This teacher feels that it is his duty to students to "adjust them socially," and the use of the active voice conveys the approach.

The teacher chided the children about their demonstrated inability to wait their turn during the previous day's art lesson. He told them that they might as well learn to wait now because they would be spending a large percentage of their lives waiting--

in restaurants, theaters, and places like that.

Mr. Howard told the children to sit up straight, for if they continued to slouch, he would have to walk around the room and "sit them up straight."

While Mr. Howard was doing a math problem at the board, he noticed that some children were not paying attention "as if their lives depended on it." He told them that their lives may depend on math some day, especially the girls. He explained that the girls could not be housewives for the rest of their lives; "they work now-a-days, you know."

The teacher told the class that the reason children quit school at sixteen was because they were lazy and couldn't study. "They may give other excuses for dropping out, but laziness is the real reason behind it," he said. He also warned the children not to get into the habit of making excuses for themselves and blaming others for things they did.

Mr. Howard was talking about the draft and told the boys that the Army would not take them without a high school diploma. He explained that the Army wasn't going to "trust any numbskull" with weapons, trucks, or ammunition if he didn't have a high school education. "And," he continued, "if you can't serve your country, you get a very empty feeling inside."

When control attempts seem ineffective, the teacher ignores the same behavior; there is little else he can do to save face, an important consideration to him. Nor can he allow the youngsters to feel that they are flaunting his authority, since once youngsters like these get the upper hand ....Better to survive to fight them another day.

After he walked down the aisles inspecting their papers, Mr. Howard asked if everyone was ready. Then he showed the children the exact position in which he wanted them to hold their papers on their desks. One girl raised

her hand and said, "Mr. Howard, I can't keep my paper that way 'cause I can't write with this hand." "Why not?" he asked. "What's wrong with your hand?" She replied, "Nothing. I write with this (left) one." Peals of laughter filled the room as the teacher disregarded her and went on with the directions.

Miss Stewart, the student teacher, asked the class, "Who would like to live in the Sahara Desert?" and Joe raised his hand. The regular teacher then interrupted to ask Joe, "Why?" Joe said nothing at first, but the teacher questioned him further, and the class began to laugh. He asserted that "This is not funny" and that he wanted to know why Joe would like to live there. Joe finally replied that he "just likes the desert," at which the teacher dropped the issue. He walked over to the observer and commented quietly, "I thought I could pin him down, but I couldn't."

Meanwhile, there is a curriculum to be taught to those who will listen. A third group of children do "listen." They stay "with" the teacher, they race each other to get their hands in the air, and they respond vibrantly and efficiently to questions. The "official" rules are their rules; little justification is required in terms of the value, the relevance, or even the accuracy of what they are learning. In this context, they are motivated, competitive, and achievement-oriented; in many ways, they are not unlike the children at Briar Hill. But they seem a bit out of place and unsure of themselves, and they would be less likely to debate a point with their teacher. Six of these children were to be reassigned around mid-year to a fifth grade class, which would then become a combined fifth and sixth grade. This was done because the school authorities felt that the atmosphere of the sixth grade class was too disruptive to their learning. For the most part, the teaching seems to be directed at them. The teacher sticks to the formal curriculum, however; there is little effort to expand horizons or the realm of inquiry. Rote learning is emphasized, and drill seems to be the method of choice. The higher achievers tend to be rewarded by the teacher but rejected by their peers.

Mr. Howard gave out the spelling papers from the previous day and told the children to write the words that they had missed

twenty times each. He told them not to complain and tell him that they didn't have time to do it because he knew that they did.

"Who doesn't know what democracy means?" asked Mr. Howard. One girl raised her hand, and he said, "Are you kidding?" "No," she replied. Mr. Howard became annoyed and told her to write the word one hundred times and then to recite it twenty-five times orally.

Jimmy was working by himself on a special project in the back of the room and, when the teacher stepped out for a few minutes, several children told him rather angrily to go back to his seat.

The three types of youngsters described (the apathetic nonparticipants, the disruptive nonparticipants, and the "go along" students) emerge clearly, as do the differential teacher responses. In addition, the range of ability levels represented in the class is noteworthy, but the underlying commonalities are of interest as well. The appearance and behavior of the youngsters suggest common stereotypes associated with low-income, urban youth. Despite the apparently wide range of intelligence, verbal skills tend to be low. Even the pupils who are successful by the teacher's standards often appear to be "serving time" rather than becoming academically oriented and involved. It is as if the three groups differentiated above have chosen three ways of coping with irrelevant but compulsory experience. Some actively reject it, some essentially ignore it, and the "good pupils" knuckle under, learn the rules, and "play the game" without its seeming to have much meaning for them. Whichever their predominant mode of operation, most of the youngsters seem to have a strong capacity for survival in spite of, rather than facilitated by, their school experience.

This is not to say that the youngsters are passive in their classroom behavior. They are lively and colorful, far from placid or bland. They may compete fiercely to be called on to answer the teacher's questions, but many seem to care little whether their responses are correct. Perhaps the attention is more important to them, or the opportunity to affect (and sometimes disrupt) the class. Social factors such as these are apparently the motivators, with academic considerations usually in the background.

It seems apparent that the pupils have not learned how to function effectively without the teacher. When he is present,

the situation is rigidly structured and authoritarian; there is no doubt about who is in charge. But when he leaves the room, the children's spontaneity erupts as negativistic, rebellious misbehavior.

> During the health lesson being taught by Miss Stewart, the regular teacher left the room for a few minutes. As soon as he was out the door, the boys began to kick one another and to throw spitballs and other paper objects around the room.
>
> The teacher took a small reading group to one corner of the room and told them that they could pick a story for their reading lesson. "I really shouldn't let you make the choice," he said, "but I will this once." There was a great deal of confusion about which to choose and, when the teacher finally suggested one, they promptly began to read it.

In a sense, some of the children recognize that they are largely dependent on external control.

> Miss Stewart was trying to conduct a lesson on letter writing while the regular teacher was out of the classroom. The class was very disorganized, there was a great deal of noise and extraneous movement, and only a few children were paying any attention to her. A boy and a girl were working by themselves on a new bulletin board, but the rest of the class was in a state of disturbance. Miss Stewart battled for about five minutes, trying to continue the lesson and to get her point across; the class was going its own way. After a while, she gave up and assigned written work to be collected in fifteen minutes. The class became quieter except for a series of disruptive incidents involving one or a few children at a time.... The regular teacher then walked into the room, and the class came to order almost instantly. One girl breathed what seemed to be a sigh of relief and said, "Oh, Mr. Howard, you're back.

The teacher is a disciplinarian first and a teacher second, and he perceives himself with pride as being among a small, informal fraternity of teachers who can work effectively with

"this kind of child." He has his own approach, one not necessarily approved by educational "authorities." Since he feels that the majority of teachers cannot handle this type of teaching assignment, he enjoys a special subjective status even though teaching at Downtown carries low status in the school system as a whole. His assignment at Downtown is seen as a hard and honorable calling that requires the teacher always to be the boss. The youngsters cannot be permitted to get the upper hand, so the teacher must pose as omniscient, rarely acknowledging that he has been wrong about something or that he doesn't know.

> During a lesson on syllabication, a girl raised her hand to tell Mr. Howard that he had made a mistake in one of the words he had written on the board. Mr. Howard did not check to see if she was right (which she was) and dismissed the mistake by saying, "I'm sorry. That's the way English is. You can't argue with that." Soon afterward, he made the same mistake again. When he realized, he told the class that he had done it intentionally to see if anyone would catch his mistake.

Pupils are not expected to take much initiative and seem to do little work on their own; they accept the teacher's authority and seldom attempt to correct him. There are many "special rules" they must learn and observe concerning classroom behavior.

> Mr. Howard noticed one boy chewing without permission and ordered him to "swallow whatever is in your mouth, even if it is an eraser, and eat it." (On another occasion, a boy had asked Mr. Howard if he could chew gum that afternoon, and Mr. Howard had given him permission.)
>
> Mr. Howard surveyed the room and said, "Susan do you have studying to do?" Susan's reply was, "Yes." Mr. Howard said, "Yes, Mr. Howard," and the girl repeated, "Yes, Mr. Howard." Some of the rules almost seem contrived to minimize the need and opportunity for pupil-teacher interaction and confrontation.
>
> Many children had their hands raised after completing an English assignment. Those with one finger in the air were allowed to sharpen their pencils, those with three were permitted to go to the lavatory, while those with five were visited by Mr. Howard. (Two fingers is

a request to get a library book from the back of the room.)

When the last lesson of the morning ended, Mr. Howard told those on patrol to get their coats. A number of boys and girls got out of their seats and began walking toward the closet. Suddenly, Mr. Howard shouted, "Freeze," and everyone "froze" in the positions they were in at the time. Mr. Howard told them that no one should be out of his seat unless he was going on patrol or talking to the student teacher. Then he called, "Unfreeze," and the children scattered toward the closet to get their coats or toward their seats.

The teacher stresses that things should be done "his way" in school even if they are done differently elsewhere. Answers are expected to reflect what is taught this year in this classroom, whether or not it contradicts what was learned last year or in the "outside world."

Mr. Howard then wrote the number 3914 on the board and called on individual pupils to read it. One boy said, "Three thousand, nine hundred, and fourteen." Many of the children responded with excited "Oohs" and "Aahs," indicating that he had made a mistake. Mr. Howard called on two others who offered the same (apparently incorrect) answer. The fourth respondent said, "Three thousand, nine hundred, fourteen," the response desired. Then Mr. Howard had the entire class chant the number that way several times: "Three thousand, nine hundred, fourteen." He told them that when they inserted the word "and," he would put a decimal there and call them wrong.

Thus, truth and knowledge are not the goals. Success is to perceive the dichotomy between the classroom and the rest of the world and to respond as is appropriate and expected in each situation. Not only potentially constructive motivation and initiative, but also the development of personal integrity and identity may be retarded by these requirements and the overall teacher-centered atmosphere.

During the project, the children responded anonymously in writing to several essay questions about their concept of the "ideal

pupil." A few weeks later, it was decided that the papers should be identified to permit comparative analyses with aptitude, achievement, and other scores. Therefore, the children were asked to identify their papers, and they agreed. Several of the children were unable to do so, however, either by handwriting or by content. Two pupils selected the papers of other pupils as theirs. (In the two other sixth grades studied, the children were able to identify their papers quickly and accurately.)

When Mr. Howard asked for the meaning of a word, several children called out the answer. He told them that he would not talk above them; there was room for only one talker in the room and that was he. He said that he loved to hear himself talk and that the children "hate" to hear themselves talk. "Isn't that right?" he asked. The children nodded in agreement, and the lesson continued.

The teacher's basically condescending approach must be reflected to the youngsters and seems prone to reinforce their alienation from school and the larger, adult society it supposedly represents, encouraging further suppression by the teacher in a continuing cycle. Despite his efforts at self-justification, it seems apparent that the teacher in such a situation must be "serving time" along with his pupils.

Miss Stewart was having a particularly difficult time trying to control and teach the class. Mr. Howard turned to the observer and told her never to become a teacher.

While the boys were at gym, a number of the girls came up to Mr. Howard's desk and gave him work that they had completed. He seemed rather disgusted as he commented to the observer that he had already made up the marks and the children were still handing in work.

It should not be inferred that this teacher is always remote and disinterested or that his pupils dislike him. He often plays the "showman," using a variety of gimmicks to arouse and stimulate the class when he wants to get a point across.

While giving the test, the teacher read the questions slowly and with exaggerated precision, emphasizing key points, in an effort to keep the attention of the class.

The teacher tried mumbling to get the attention of the class. The children began to call out, "What? What did you say?" His mumbling gone, the teacher responded, "See, I could get your attention by speaking Greek, but when I speak English, you don't listen. Next time you <u>listen</u> when I speak English."

The teacher called the children to attention by telling them to, "Look at me, because I'm the best looking person in the room."

While reading about ancient Egypt, the class encountered a date labeled, "B.C." "Quick," asked Mr. Howard, "tell me how many years ago that was." After a slight pause, he continued, "Well, what is the first thing you have to remember? Quick!" The class began to get excited. Someone said that negative numbers were needed, and Mr. Howard continued to fire rapid questions. Finally, a boy gave the answers sought, and the excitement dissipated.

The teacher is well liked and frequently, at relaxed times, he socializes and jokes with the children, although he attempts not to let the reins become too loose.

One boy asked the teacher how long the social studies test would be. He replied, "Three or four hours, or maybe a few days."

The class was discussing components of the Greek diet, and someone mentioned "kids." The teacher said, "Oh, that's good. Now I can get rid of some of you kids." Several children called out to correct him. "No, no. Kid means goat!" In a disappointed tone, the teacher responded, "Oh. I was hoping I could get rid of you. I was saying 'Hooray' already!"

During "chorus time," when half of the class was out of the room, the teacher began to hum

rather loudly and deliberately, apparently very much aware of what he was doing. When the children began to laugh, the humming became even louder and more flowery. One boy called out, that, "Someone better close the door." The teacher then walked to the front of the room and suddenly clapped his hands together. The children came to attention immediately, then relaxed when they realized that this, too, was part of the fun.

A girl approached the teacher and asked him whether he would like to hear a joke. He was smiling, but she told him to be "very serious," and he immediately changed to a serious expression. She said, "Do you think Mickey Mouse could ever be a rat?" to which he did not respond at all. "That's the joke, you stupid nut!" she exclaimed. He said nothing more to her but turned to the observer soon after she had taken her seat, indicating that he "really shouldn't tease these kids" but that because of the relaxed classroom atmosphere now, it was all right. He also indicated that this type of interaction had to be controlled, particularly with the girls. The teacher then turned to the class and said that "talking time is over" and that they were supposed to study now.

The teacher's behavior seems to stimulate cooperation and enthusiasm but action still seems to be i n the service of the "right answers." In large measure, the teacher operates as he pleases within the classroom, even when this is in conflict with officially approved practices. He is open about this with the children--perhaps using it in part as a device with which to enlist their loyalty--so they seem able to dissociate him from the "system" he supposedly represents and which they reject just as he does. To an extent, then, the children and their teacher are allies, united against a system whose nominal goals and methods they perceive as alien.

The teacher told the children that the school would have an "open house" for parents instead of individual parent conferences as in the past. He said that he did not approve of the change, that he had told this to the Board of Education, and that he liked talking with the parents. He

went on to say that he might chat informally with parents during the open house and "No one will ever know about it."

During a discussion of the concept of infinity, one of the pupils referred to "way back before Christ was born, when the earth began." The teacher said that he did not want to discuss religion but that he would sneak it in now and then. "I'd rather not get reported," he said, "but I've been in trouble before, and it's all right to continue." He then indicated that theologians believe the world was created in 4004 B.C. "But if you believe in evolution," he continued, "you can just rip up your Bibles and not believe this date either."

Fundamentally, this teacher seems able to turn "teacher behavior" on and off at will, just as he expects his pupils to differentiate academia from the "real world," with minimal interaction between the two. It seems that he, too, is in this sense rejecting the concept and the substance of school. Perhaps he is helping to create the socially disadvantaged, anti-intellectual, working class adults of tomorrow.

Briar Hill Elementary School

One of the city's four high schools, located in the Briar Hill Section near the city limits, is reputed to serve primarily the intellectually elite; an overwhelming majority of its graduates go on to college. This school and its neighbor, Briar Hill Elementary, share a large, rolling site surrounded by modern, ranch-type homes with ample lawns. Both buildings are new and of similar light brick construction. Landscaped school grounds and playing fields enhance an already attractive setting. The halls and classrooms at Briar Hill are bright, clean, and excitingly adorned with children's work and information on current events and study units. The children greet their teachers and each other with an air of expectancy, and the teachers seem to know that they need to be "on their toes," at least in an intellectual sense. There appears to be an undercurrent of concern about the observers among the faculty, although some teachers quickly begin to converse with them almost as colleagues. Beyond social pleasantries and amenities, the children pay relatively little attention to them. The classroom atmosphere reflects the teacher's general informality.

As one boy was presenting a report on the population of Argentina, Mr. Allen was returning homework papers to others in the class.

The teacher sat at his desk eating candy as a boy gave a science report.

The teacher came to the observer's seat and told her a joke during an oral report.

While the children and the teacher were working quietly at their desks, a girl took a book she had received from her sister to the front of the room to show to the teacher. They discussed it for a few minutes, and he suggested others that she might be interested in reading. She then went back to her work and he to his.

The twenty-six pupils move around freely as they do their work, rarely disturbing their classmates. All seem concerned with both learning and grades and most work seriously and competitively to achieve. Concern with college admission is already visible. Frequently, such pressures find overt expression in the classroom.

At the conclusion of her report, one girl produced a large scroll of paper which she unwound with the help of two classmates to show various pictures of countries in Latin America. Mr. Allen seemed impressed and commented that he enjoyed her originality. At this, many boys and girls in the class called out with apparent distaste that she had done the same type of thing in the fifth grade.

After a self-graded social studies test, the children were requested to call out their marks when their names were called. A few children refused to do this and walked up to the teacher's desk to show him their papers instead.

After Mr. Allen graded a notebook and the pupil returned with it to his desk, classmates in the immediate area turned to ask him what grade he had received.

Despite this concern for achievement, the youngsters are usually good-natured and enthusiastic. They are attractively dressed, well groomed, and bright-looking, and many have a keen, although often sarcastic, sense of humor. Most tend to be highly verbal and relate almost as comfortably to adults as to each other.

> After giving his report, one boy told the class that he wanted to give another teacher in the school (whom he named) credit for its title, "The Economy of Argentina." He explained that he was about to title it "The Agriculture of Argentina," but that Mrs. S had suggested the word "economy" when he discussed his report with her.
>
> While discussing Chile, the teacher mentioned that the Chilean government had a naval station near Cape Horn. The children tried to determine why Chile needed a navy and suggested that they might look for lost Antartic explorers or catch penguins. Someone made a joke about smoking Kools, and then they moved to a new topic.

Little "traditional" teaching occurs. The teacher serves more often as a group leader than as the "boss," and can and does admit when he has been wrong. He provides the class with a flexible framework for learning in a particular content area, but most of the actual learning is a joint effort involving pupils and teacher together.

> As the class proceeded from one person to another with each spelling a given word, pupils often raised their hands to challenge particular answers. The teacher's responses were often challenged along with the rest.
>
> During a lesson on diagramming sentences, the teacher sent two boys to the board to illustrate the method. They did the first two sentences correctly but were unable to do the third. He told them that they were "mixed up" and said, "Let's start at the beginning." Then they all went over the sentence step by step, analyzing and diagramming each part together.

Although the classroom structure is loose and learning tasks are often ambiguous, the youngsters can and do provide their own structure when the teacher does not. They take a great deal of initiative and responsibility and are largely self-directing, self-disciplined, and self-sufficient.

As one boy began his oral report, a girl raised her hand and asked the teacher if they should take notes. He replied, "Well, make up your own minds and do whatever you think is best." Nearly all of the pupils took out their notebooks and began taking notes.

During a library period, a few of the girls asked the teacher whether they would be required to write individual reports about Chile. He indicated that they would. They then wanted to know if there would be assigned topics. The teacher told them that topics would not be assigned and that if they found a topic they would like to research, they should consult him for approval.

The teacher stepped out of the room for a few minutes while the children read silently from their texts. There was absolute quiet as they read and as each child finished the story, he began working on something else or walked to the class library to browse.

The boys left for gym, and the girls immediately put their books away. One girl went to the class library at the back of the room and began to call the rows, asking girls to bring back borrowed books. When this procedure was completed, she called the rows again asking those who would like to borrow books to do so. This period lasted one-half hour, during which the girls talked quietly and joked sporadically but were primarily engaged in reading their books. The teacher busied himself with his own work, apparently paying very little attention to the class proceedings.

The youngsters often become involved in and excited about their work to the point of disruption, the most frequent cause of interventions by the teacher. He is more apt to intervene with subtle or direct "reminders" or good-humored sarcasm than with direct threats or punishment, whether to control behavior or to stimulate improved academic performance.

While testbooks were being collected, the children began to talk rather loudly to one another about their workbook answers. The teacher rang a bell at his desk and asked

those who had questions to come up front and talk with him. The class quieted down quickly and about ten pupils came to him with questions.

While checking one girl's science notebook, the teacher pointed out a number of spelling errors and told her that her book was of generally poor quality. He reminded her that she would not get a very good science mark if she did not improve.

Mr. Allen checked one boy's notebook and told him he would accept it if this was the best work the boy could do but that he had a feeling that this was not the boy's best effort; the boy agreed that it was not. Mr. Allen then said that he would not accept anything less than the boy's best and that the boy should not accept less either.

The teacher told the children that he would soon collect and grade their notebooks. One boy asked if he could re-copy his in order to get a better grade. Mr. Allen replied, "No. You did that in the fourth and fifth grades; this is graduate school, man!"

Frequently, members of the class use similar techniques to improve performance and to restore order themselves before the teacher does, apparently, in some cases, to court his favor. This is another manifestation of the importance with which school success is regarded by Briar Hill pupils. On occasion, there may be hurt feelings when the more sensitive youngsters find themselves the targets of virtually unconscious ridicule to which their teacher as well as their classmates may contribute. In most cases, however, the children do not seem to react overtly even to rather biting taunts.

> At one o'clock, pupils began drifting in from patrols or from lunch, and most worked quietly at their desks while some browsed in the library area at the rear of the room. One boy began to tell jokes, thus interrupting the quiet atmosphere, and others started to talk more loudly as well. The children soon became quiet again of their own accord. A few minutes later, when someone else raised his voice, a boy said, "You're not supposed to talk now." The

class quieted down again, and work and whispering continued until the teacher returned at 1:15 P.M.

The teacher chided a boy for writing too small, commenting that the boy wrote everything too small. Another youngster across the room called out, "Someone made him too small," referring to the latter's small stature. The class laughed.

The teacher called two boys up to his desk and asked them if they were competing for last place in the class.

Mr. Allen asked someone to volunteer to read a paragraph in the encyclopedia. When no one responded, he asked for his "pushcart peddler who sells fish." The boy he was referring to stepped forward and began to read in a loud, penetrating voice.

As the class was preparing for an arithmetic lesson, one boy dropped several things underneath his desk. The teacher said, "Having a problem, Walker? Do you need to be changed or something?"

A pupil mispronounced many Spanish words while delivering his report on the economy of Argentina. At one point, when he mispronounced Buenos Aires, the teacher repeated the mispronunciation and made fun of it. Soon after this, another Spanish noun was mispronounced, and a boy sitting in the back of the room began to snicker.

A girl made several mistakes while putting an arithmetic example on the blackboard, and the teacher's comments elicited laughter from her classmates. Finally, he took her hand and led her closer to the board, saying, "Let me take you where you can see it." The class laughed uproariously.

Much of the time, there is an active exchange of verbal humor and sarcasm between pupils and teacher; occasionally, the teacher seems to be beyond his depth.

Before giving her report, a girl told the teacher that she could not find much information about the clothing of Argentina. He said, "What? You mean they don't use too much clothing in Argentina?" The class burst out in laughter. Then she tried to explain that she could not find out very much about Argentinian food either. Mr. Allen replied, "Doesn't everyone eat hamburgers? There is so much meat down there, they must eat hamburgers."

One of the exercises the children were to do involved using as many new vocabulary words as possible in sentences. One girl had a particularly ludicrous, though correct, sentence in which she had squeezed in as many words as she could. Apparently tongue-in-cheek, Mr. Allen told her that it was "very good" and that he could "hardly wait to hear another one." The girl began to giggle, but Mr. Allen became angry and abruptly told her to read.

The teacher commented that George Washington Carver had thought up "thousands of uses for peanuts." One boy quipped, "Oh, then he worked for peanuts." Mr. Allen's unsmiling response was, "It is not even a nut, but a bean."

The youngsters also challenge their teacher on the content of what he teaches, and they capitulate, if at all, in the face of evidence that he is right. Rarely can they be browbeaten into agreement, nor does the teacher try. These students are already concerned about grades for college entrance but, given a choice, most prefer to be right, particularly if they can show the teacher that he is wrong.

While the teacher was criticising the class for doing less well on a test than he had expected, Steve interrupted to say that he could prove right an answer that had been marked wrong. The teacher listened to Steve's explanation and explained his own, different point of view. Steve then agreed that the answer his teacher had preferred was better than his own.

In going over the social studies test, the teacher read question one and gave the answer he thought was correct. He then asked

> if there was any difference of opinion, and many people raised their hands to offer alternate suggestions. The teacher agreed that some of the other answers suggested might be just as correct as his and accepted them for credit.

Most Briar Hill youngsters, at least those in this particular class, have had a relatively wide range of "educational" advantages, perhaps even more than their teacher, outside the school. They have the support of family traditions and peer standards which reinforce the value their teachers and the schools place on academic learning. Perhaps these students represent the "haves" in our society; they are in tune with it, and they are enjoying its rewards. Their school may not, however, be giving them a picture of the broader spectrum of the changing world of today, but rather an echo of the cultural encapsulation that they may experience at home as well.

Brookville Elementary School

A new interstate highway provides the most direct route from the city to the Brookville vicinity. The twenty-minute drive from the highway to Brookville itself winds through an area of small, hilly farms. Most of the houses that dot the countryside are modest, old, and in varying states of obvious disrepair. The dilapidation becomes more frequent as one approaches town, where the new building that is Brookville School looks almost out of place. It is a small school, with but one class in each of the seven elementary grades, including kindergarten. The sixth grade teacher serves as principal ("head teacher") as well and is supervised by a district principal who is responsible for several schools in the area. Many of the children arrive by bus from the surrounding countryside. No one seems to be in much of a hurry, and the presence of observers appears to arouse more curiosity than anxiety. The teachers seem almost flattered, though hard put to understand why anyone interested in studying education would choose their school to observe. The overall atmosphere is reflected in the relaxed, nonrestrictive acceptance of the observers, although it sometimes seems that a teacher is making a special effort to impress the observer in the classroom.

> The teacher asked the children if they would like to change the class schedule for the day. She explained that they might very easily get into a rut, so they should talk about science this morning, since the observers were in the room.

During an experiment, Mrs. Drake said to the class, "If you can't see, come over and gather in a circle." She then looked back at the observer and said, "Out of the way, please; make a clearing for the observer." The children then made a gap in the circle to give the observer a better view.

The girls were giving their answers to homework questions in arithmetic. Each time one of the responses was wrong, the teacher looked at the observer and smiled.

Don's seat is on the left side of the room and it was necessary for him to pass the observer on his way to and from the closet where he picked up an object for the science display. The teacher was giving a class assignment as he did this but stopped to approach Don as he reached the science table. She leaned over to say something to him, and then he returned to his seat. After a few minutes, the teacher said, "Don, will you now go do what I spoke to you about?" Don left his seat, came closer to the observer, and said, "Excuse me for walking in front of you."

Most of the twenty-four youngsters in the sixth grade class at Brookville seem to be not only poor in the economic sense but also socially limited. They appear shabby and colorless, almost lifeless. Even the girls seem little concerned with their appearance. Many are overweight as well as unkempt, poorly groomed, and poorly dressed. In general, they are downtrodden-looking children, and their school behavior does little to dispel this impression. They are apathetic, docile, submissive, even self-deprecating. Negativism in any form seems not to be in their behavioral repertoire. They do what they are told, they seem to believe unquestioningly what they are taught, and they have relatively little interaction with their peers. There is an absence of classroom "play"--no paper folding, passing of notes, making paper airplanes, drawing pictures on notebooks, or chuckling together about a playground incident after lunch. Nor does the school situation promote play opportunities, since many of the youngsters must leave on the bus soon after the school day ends.

Spontaneity seems to be lacking as well. The children rarely initiate contacts even with such frequent visitors as the observers, as sixth graders are wont to do. They know the

observers' names but use them mainly in "Hello" situations in the hall or in prompting a teacher who has forgotten. There is no excitement, no enthusiasm, no "brilliance" to their relationships. Individuality is lacking, and the students hardly seem to differentiate themselves clearly from each other. They give the impression of being inferior and that the world is beyond their ken, to be coped with only by listening to whatever they are told and keeping out of the way.

This pattern fits comfortably with the "homey" approach and needs of their teacher, who appears in many ways to be one of them. She often draws on her personal experience to illustrate concretely, somewhat dramatically, and on the children's level what she is trying to teach.

> While discussing the concept of fear, the teacher told of her childhood reputation as a tomboy. She added that she is now very frightened of some of the same things she did so easily as a child.
>
> Mrs. Drake asked the children if they had seen any old movies where a man used a long funnel in his ear to hear better. She described this horn-like device used by the deaf to funnel in more sound and talked about its use as a hearing aid. Then Mrs. Drake went on to imitate an old, New England-type farmer with his funnel in his ear, the characterization being complete with walk, regional accent, and "By cracky" interjections. The children seemed quite amused.

In general, the Brookville teachers do not seem particularly well educated in their profession and may be unaware that some of their methods are outdated at best. No one seems particularly defensive, nor is there much concern about the possibly more advanced and more effective educational practices in the city.

What interaction occurs in the classroom tends to be teacher-centered; group discussion appears to be unheard of. Communication flows from the teacher to the class or to an individual. Rote learning, memory, rules, and drill are emphasized, and results are tested primarily through questions-and-answers and oral recitation.

> The teacher called on a number of people to give the successive steps in problem solving but found that only one girl knew them. She

scolded the class, saying that they had all copied the steps down but probably had never even looked at them. That was the reason, she said, that they had so much trouble with arithmetic.

Mrs. Drake asked one of the girls to go to the board and write the first "thing" (step) of problem solving. The girl did this, writing "Read Carefully" on the board. Another girl was asked to write the second step, but she did not know it. Mrs. Drake said, "It just goes to show you," and indicated that the girl had a number of answers wrong because she did not know the rules.

Much of the time, the class responds on cue, in unison.

The teacher was reviewing a list of nouns that the textbook had described as "things that cannot be seen." Discussing the word "idea," for example, she asked, "Can you see an idea?" The class responded, "No." "Can you feel an idea?" "No."

Mrs. Drake asked the children how they could make sure that their arithmetic answers were right, and they all called out, "Check it."

The teacher told the class how they could construct a diorama for display during the school's Open House for parents. She said it was a very good way to present their work and asked if they liked the idea. Everyone replied, "Yes." She then asked if they would like to break up into committees and again the children responded with a unanimous "Yes."

Mrs. Drake wanted the class to tell her the last step in problem solving. She said they might as well learn it now because it was going to be required "over there," referring to the junior high school. She said, "Class?" and they answered, "Label."

The teacher's histrionics and the group responses of the class sometimes combine to create an atmosphere almost like that of a revival meeting.

> The teacher then went back to her desk, retrieved a National Geographic magazine, and said, "One of our new states, what?" The class responded in unison, "Alaska." She went on to tell the children that here were some pictures of the Alaskan earthquake. In a dramatic voice, she said, "That's what happened--the earth cracked right there and dropped to nothing. Houses, stores, everything tipped like this (illustrating with her hands that the earth had changed position), hanging. Then the water comes in like this," she continued, showing the children a flooded area that was illustrated in the magazine. She then said to the children, "Have you ever had a truck passing by that shook the school room like in our old school building?" The children responded in unison, "Yes." Then she said, "Does our earth's surface change?" And the children responded in unison, "Yes." The teacher then said, "It surely does."

That the children seem to acquiesce to this teacher's approach is illustrated by their apparently blind acceptance of what she says as truth, at least for classroom purposes. Erroneous or misleading material is frequently presented and accepted.

> The teacher began a lesson on prehistoric man by explaining that these men lived on the earth "billions and billions of years ago."
>
> The teacher was asking the children to give causes for changes in the earth's surface while she listed them on the blackboard. She said that she would accept only distinctly different causes, but at the end of the session had included both "erosion" and "water carrying the soil away" on her list.
>
> Mrs. Drake told the youngsters that those with sixth grade readers were to begin the story of Pecos Bill. She asked the children if they knew anything about Pecos Bill stories, and one boy replied that the stories were nonfiction. Mrs. Drake agreed with this answer and asked for a definition of "nonfiction"; she finally accepted the answer that "not an ounce of it is true."

After being told, "You use some words to describe what you name and some to join other words together" the class was asked to give an example of a word used to join other words together. One child suggested the word "grandmother," which the teacher apparently accepted, for she continued with the next part of the grammar lesson.

The teacher asked, "What are the three essentials for man's life?" Someone answered, "food"; another, "clothing." A girl then raised her hand and said, "oxygen." The teacher seemed a bit surprised, but she dismissed the answer almost immediately by saying that they were "not discussing that now." After a while, the third desired response, "shelter," was given and accepted.

Mrs. Drake asked the class what cave men looked like, and one boy responded that they were "hunched over." Asked to explain further, he said, "Sort of like apes." The teacher then explained that, while cave men were hunched over, "We certainly don't want to say that they came from apes." The discussion was then dropped.

Sometimes things that are obviously incorrect, seemingly even to the children, are accepted by them nonetheless--almost as if the teacher's role is to define what is fact and what is not. In part, "school" consists of learning the teacher's idiosyncracies and expected answers, and honoring them. It also includes learning incorrect information. The children seem to exert a great deal of effort in these directions, apparently in an attempt to please their teacher, and they rarely argue a point even if they think they are right.

Classroom discipline in the usual sense seems to be absent; it is as if no one would even think of "misbehaving." Pupils and teacher alike emphasize learning--even if the material communicated is false--and little else seems to happen at school. The overall submissive climate is further illustrated by the apparent absence of negativism among both pupils and teachers. Perhaps "resignation" or "fatalism" best describes the general attitude. At the same time, there seems to be a feeling of closeness between pupils and teacher which may have some elements of an "in-group" mutuality and which apparently reflects a general nurturance of and concern for the children. This may be

related to the absence of visible negativism, but it may also render the children more vulnerable to misinformation communicated by their teachers as well as to distorted and inadequate social stimulation.

Although the school climate seems tightly structured, the teaching process is poorly organized and tends to present assorted facts rather than coherent "units."

> The girls finished their paper correction about ten minutes before the boys were scheduled to return from the gym. The teacher started a new formal lesson which continued until the boys returned and was then dropped in the middle.
>
> Mrs. Drake asked the class to list various causes of changes in the earth's surface. One boy answered "lightning," and was asked to "explain your thinking." He responded by saying, "Fire or rotting," and used the example of a tree falling and decaying, thereby changing the earth's surface. Mrs. Drake seemed to consider this answer wrong, and tried to give several concrete examples illustrating the difference between his response and a "correct" one. She then told him that a tree's rotting was not enough of a phenomenon to bring about a change in the earth's surface and that the process of decay took a long time. She went into a lengthy discussion of volcanic action, told an anecdote about a volcano erupting on a cornfield, drew pictures of cornstalks on the blackboard, and illustrated a statement about rock stratification. She then returned to the boy and asked, "Do you understand now?" The boy responded, "Yes."
>
> The teacher drew something on the board and told the class that it was a pie. "Pies have layers," she said, "and they also have a--what?" Several children responded, "Crust." She went on to tell the class that the earth has topsoil with "the good stuff in it." Next, she described the process of digging a well near her house: "Over at our place, we have hardpan and, when they tried to dig a well, they ran into that stuff--what?" (no response) "...can't build--what? --what am I

> thinking of?--quicksand. They hit a cross vein where there was plenty of H_2O. They used one of those divining rods and, right where the pull was the greatest, they went through the layers to the water." She talked a little more about the layers of earth, then said, "Coal, what are you burning when you burn coal?" One of the children responded, "Wood." The teacher said, "Paper."

There is much apparently random and undirected activity, except when there are specific facts to be regurgitated. The structure that does exist provides a seemingly rigid, authoritarian environment.

> The teacher asked Linda to divide a square into fourths. Linda did so, but her dividing lines were not exactly straight, so the teacher erased them and drew them herself. She then asked Linda what each part was called. Linda replied, "fourths," but the teacher said, "No, no. Each part." Linda seemed puzzled and could not respond. The teacher spent the next twenty minutes giving concrete examples (which Linda understood mathematically) before Linda "caught on" and could give the desired response, "one fourth."

Much of what is taught appears to be inappropriate to the needs, interests, and abilities of the youngsters.

Despite the teacher's enthusiams , spontaneity, and apparent concern for the children, she seems to have neither the educational skills nor the sensitivity to stimulate them out of their general lethargy and to provide them with a fertile educational experience. Barring outside influence, Brookville School seems destined to continue on its present undefined course, with its most gifted graduates going on to college to qualify to teach in the Brookville Schools of the future.

Conclusions

Three classrooms have just been described. While they may not be typical or representative of anything beyond themselves, they may reflect more general practices in inner-city, suburban, and rural schools. In any case, it seems appropriate to examine

the similarities and contrasts to see what they may be able to teach us. Many hypotheses emerge, and readers are encouraged to develop and examine their own. A few are presented here in an effort to draw the material together, to suggest some ways in which it may "make sense" as a whole, and to imply a few directions for subsequent, more systematic study and program development.

It seems clear that each of the classrooms can be, and sometimes is, a negative, perhaps damaging environment for children. In this context, it is important to emphasize that each of the three classroom teachers is doing the best job he or she knows how to do. None of the teachers is attempting to hurt or short-change any child, and all are committed to their work. Their failures reflect particular personalities and value orientations, deficits of knowledge and skill, and limitations consciously or unconsciously imposed by the schools, rather than willfully negative or apathetic behavior.

This is at once both a most hopeful and a most discouraging conclusion. It is hopeful because we have seen teachers who care, teachers who want to give children something of themselves and something of value. It is discouraging because we have seen that the same teachers, restricted by their personal and professional limitations and sometimes by the organization of the schools themselves frequently cannot do so. The inner-city teacher who openly resists authority yet severely restricts autonomy in his own classroom is, in effect, teaching disadvantaged children how to be disadvantaged. The rural teacher, apparently with a limited conception of the "outside world" herself, is able to do little to help her pupils realize new vistas and seems, instead, to be rewarding passivity. The suburban teacher seems to accept and even to reinforce the competitive, sometimes hostile values of his talented class, making little effort to introduce new perspectives. And these appear to be three of our better teachers. It seems once more evident that grass roots educational change will not come easily even if we can agree on the direction it should take.

All three settings show structural and organizational similarities; all are readily recognizable as "school." The "system" in all three schools tends to demand behavioral conformity and academic achievement, although in different proportions. Still, marked differences among the schools appeared from the beginning of the study. Principals and teachers at both Downtown and Briar Hill were somewhat suspicious and defensive when the project was proposed. At Brookville, on the other hand, school personnel seemed almost naively flattered to learn that someone, particularly someone with the status of "researcher," wanted to observe them. The predominant

pupil attitude at Downtown is one of opposition or negativism, at Briar Hill, it is participation and achievement, and at Brookville, it is passive acceptance.

Briar Hill pupils both conform and learn, although it seems that less conformity is externally imposed on them than is expected at the other two schools. They "buy" the system which, in many ways, seems to be made for them. Brookville sixth graders conform even more but do not seem able to learn a great deal in the academic sphere. The youngsters at Downtown seem to reject the system itself: they learn poorly, if at all, what their teacher is attempting to teach, and they do not conform to his behavioral expectations. To attempt to teach them in a school context is to be constantly and actively concerned with control. It is not surprising to find the Briar Hill youngsters already worried about college, the Downtown class negative and resistive, and the Brookville children submissive and passive. What is surprising is the extent to which these stereotypes are reflected in reality at the three schools. It suggests that further study may demonstrate that the three schools are, after all, not atypical of the kinds of schools they represent.

The children's own descriptions of the "ideal student" reflect the same kinds of variation reported by the observers. Youngsters at Briar Hill frequently describe the ideal student favorably--he is seen as honest, friendly, and a hard worker, but within a normal range; they feel that he should not be "too good." A different twist appears frequently among the youngsters from Downtown. The ideal student is often characterized as one who "acts too big" or is stupid, creepy, or mean, in addition to being a hard worker. Apparently, anti-intellectualism runs deep and starts early among some of our people. Brookville provides yet another contrast--relatively colorless descriptions and apparently limited verbal facility. Brookville youngsters seem to write less about classroom behavior and more of learning performance as determining the ideal student than do youngsters at either of the other schools. Their relative poverty of expression provides another view of these students as relatively passive and colorless. Although the Downtown youngsters are also verbally limited, they are able to communicate their message loud and clear.

The form in which the responses were made also reflects what seem to be significant differences between the classes. For example, responses of Downtown pupils to all five questions average a total of sixty words, and those of Brookville pupils average eighty-six. Briar Hill pupils, on the other hand, average 164 words in response to the five questions. Three

per cent of the words used by Downtown and Brookville pupils consist of three syllables or more, but the total for Briar Hill is only four per cent, so the difference is slight. A count was also made of errors--spelling, punctuation, and grammar--and the percentage of errors to total words was computed. The figures are eighteen per cent for Downtown --about one error per six words--fourteen per cent for Brookville, and five per cent for Briar Hill. Of course, these differences tend to parallel the intelligence and achievement scores reported earlier; nonetheless, they are real differences. Unfortunately, there was not enough overlap in intelligence or achievement scores to permit comparisons with those factors controlled, but an attempt to do so is planned for the future. The situation is further complicated by the ambiguity surrounding what an intelligence test measures in such disparate settings.

It is harder to draw conclusions based on the teachers' "ideal pupil" descriptions, largely because only one teacher representing each of the three schools was involved. In addition, it was only after repeated requests that a response was obtained from the sixth grade teacher at Downtown School, who claimed that he had previously responded to the same questions. Wherever the slip-up occurred, the description finally obtained seems almost as perfunctory as those of his students. In the first question, for example, the three teachers were asked to "Describe the kind of behavior you would like your ideal students to display." Their responses, by school, follow, just as they appeared:

A. Downtown School:

1. Well manner (curteous)

2. Willing to accept the total environment of the classroom (rules, etc.)

B. Briar Hill School:

a. First and foremost, EMOTIONAL BALANCE.

b. A degree of SELF-ANALYSIS whereby he or she might have certain self-correcting abilities.

c. PROGRESSIVE PARTICIPATION that permits him to contribute without dominating, accept correction with out withdrawing, admit inability without shame, or regret, and the sense to value the worth of some

one else's contribution or analysis when it is worthwhile.

d. The ability to ANTICIPATE RESPONSIBILITY, listen carefully and carry out directions intelligently.

e. Cheerfulness and zest.

f. Charity.

C. Brookville School:

I am one who believes that the ideal student should be friendly, but not overbearing, courteous, and willing to take helpful criticism.

This student should have the want to learn more about any subject we may have in our daily schedule and not be content with the minimum of knowledge.

Also, this student should be one whom I could feel free to trust at any time, any place.

While it would be rash to attempt to generalize on this basis, it seems apparent that the teachers are in tune with their pupils, as is suggested in the observers' reports as well. Still open to question--and an important question--is the source of the similarity. Do teachers tend to make pupils become more like the teachers? Do children "seduce" their teachers to support and reinforce, often unconsciously, the children's own developing behavioral orientations? Do teachers gravitate toward schools with which their own personalities are in harmony? These possibilities and others, as well as their implications, will be subjected to further study.

Of the many contrasts among the three classes, only a few can be noted here. It is informative to consider class size--around forty at Downtown and under thirty at Briar Hill and Brookville. Presumably, the size of a class at Brookville is determined by happenstance--the number of children at a given grade level in the district. At Downtown, when it became apparent that the class provided an unwieldy learning environment, it was the high achievers who were removed and placed in a make-shift, combined fifth and sixth grade class. While this reflects the school's concern for the welfare of its better learners, it may also indicate the predominance of children whom the school is unable and/or unwilling to help. As can be inferred from Table 1, even school records are less complete

at Downtown and at Brookville than at Briar Hill. Perhaps this provides additional evidence of a relative lack of concern for individual pupils and their needs.

The subject of evolution arose at both Downtown and Brookville Schools during the course of our observations. In each case, the teacher at least implied a rather strong distaste for the idea. Little, if any, interpretation is warranted, but neither should this interesting coincidence go unnoticed.

The chaos at Downtown School when the teacher leaves the room seems particularly significant, especially when contrasted with Brookville (where pupils tend to do what they are told and may have little to say to one another anyway) and with Briar Hill (where internal controls are relatively strong and pupils seem to be too busy learning to get into much trouble). Accumulating evidence supports the notion that people who are trained to function with tight external control tend to become dependent on it for effective behavior, and the present work seems to point in the same direction. This also points to a serious dilemma. The assertion is frequently made, particularly by inner-city educators, that disadvantaged children need tightly structured programs. Certainly we have seen that they cannot function well when the structuring force is gone. Taken alone, however, this approach tends to perpetuate the very dependence on external control that may be a major component of a possible "disadvantaged syndrome." Consequently, what is needed is not only structure but also a planned attempt to help youngsters learn to operate with less and less of it. Such findings as those of Hunt and Dopyera that there seem to be particularly wide developmental variations within lower class populations should also be considered in this context.[5]

It is relevant, although not new, to point out that even the rebelliousness of these children may be an expression of their dependence on external attention and limits and of their lack of developing identity--as reflected in the inability of some of them to recognize their own handwriting and words. These tend to be low-status children and they know it, and they will be helped little to feel better about themselves or to achieve by continued suppression, although this may be the only way in which the school as now constituted can deal with them at all. Reference has already been made to what may be the teacher's techniques for minimizing or avoiding meaningful confrontation with his pupils.

The observations at Briar Hill, it should be remembered, turned out to involve an atypically high-achieving, high-status class, although the other sixth grade there also tended to be high achieving and of high status when compared with sixth

grade classes in the other two schools. Despite the fact that the observers entered the situation "cold," not having seen any pupil records in advance, it quickly became evident that the class being observed was too "good" to be the whole story. Suburban children do have problems and suburban schools do have low achievers. In this case, as we subsequently learned, grouping was homogeneous--the "problems" were virtually all in the other class. Little else can be said about this here, except that the situation clearly points up the need for further study of suburban schools, the kinds of problems they face, and how they deal with them. It should also be noted that, despite the apparent acceptance of the hostile sarcasm so evident in the class observed at Briar Hill, it may be a source of pain to at least some of the children. This could be the message of their description of the "ideal pupil" as one who is "modest" and not "too good," "perfect," "haughty," "snobby," or "boastful."

The apparent absence of stimulation and excitement at Brookville is reflected in many ways, one of which may be that a sampling of the observers' notes showed them to be shorter and sparser than those from either of the other two schools. Perhaps less "happens" at Brookville; it certainly does not seem to be "where the action is." The children's passivity, authority-orientation, and lack of visible negavitism in almost any form seem to render them more vulnerable to the adults in their lives. Apparently, these are adults who are often wrong to the extent of teaching incorrect information and who are ill-prepared to introduce the students to horizons much beyond their own rural community. This is not to say that the teacher is a bad one. She is a nurturing and skillful teacher, but her own knowledge and experience seem limited; she can only give the children what she has. Nor is she particularly authoritarian--the situation seems to be an authoritarian one primarily because the children's passivity makes it so. Certainly this is a setting where more could be done, but it seems unlikely that many people except "home-grown" products would, in the present situation, choose to teach there.

The implicit goals of the three schools represent, perhaps, the most overriding contrast of all, within which the other differences make a kind of sense. Downtown School seems to be largely a custodial institution, a place where poor children can, perhaps, be trained at least for social acceptability. Briar Hill, on the other hand, is more like a "prep school"--the orientation is toward bigger and better things in the future. Brookville School seems fairly clearly to be educating its pupils for life in Brookville. Perhaps these goals are not unrealistic, but some may believe that what seems

realistic today is not enough. By plan or happenstance, the schools are moving in particular directions, and it seems more intelligent to make sure that movement occurs by plan.

Other questions arise, of course, and three appear particularly worthy of note here for future reference. First, the first grade classes in the same three schools proved much harder to differentiate, perhaps due in part to the more subtle and complex and more frequently nonverbal nature of the transactions. It seems likely that first graders, being closer to infancy, tend to behave more instinctively and less on the basis of learned patterns. Therefore, perhaps, the first graders in the three schools appear more similar than do sixth graders. Also, teachers may treat them more like they treat babies--instinctively and, therefore, more similarly. The critical question, however, concerns what happens to children between grade one and grade six to convert apparently similar learning environments and pupil responses to the vast differences observed on the sixth grade level.

Second, the observers reported many outside interruptions for special classes, notices, and other reasons throughout the school day. The impact of this on teaching continuity and effectiveness needs careful attention. Finally, more systematic study of the reciprocal impact of school environments and how they are perceived by their participants might shed new light on effective strategies for change.

It seems likely that the teachers observed would feel that they have been falsely portrayed if they were to read the observers' recordings of their classrooms. This suggests that such a technique might be of value in training and supervising classroom teachers, since they rarely have the benefit of such a mirror in which to examine their own behavior. Observations followed by group or one-to-one discussions should be explored as a means for enhancing teacher insight and effectiveness.

It bears emphasizing that this report may make the schools look worse--and in some ways, perhaps, better--than they really are, since the written word carries particular impact. Our purpose is to identify the baseline--where we are--and the challenge. The settings observed may be idiosyncratic in some aspects, but they are probably not atypical in others. Therefore, a first task is to determine the extent to which they represent prototypes and to build more precise models of inner-city, suburban, and rural school environments. This can lead to new perspectives on the changes needed and ways to achieve them.

TABLE 1

BACKGROUND DATA ON PUPILS BY SCHOOL AND CLASS--SIXTH GRADES

Variable	Measure	Downtown School	Brookville School	Briar Hill Class Studied	Briar Hill Class Not Studied	All Briar Hill Sixth Grade
	N	38	22	28	28	56
Age	Median	11-2	11-3	10-7	10-6.5	10-7
	I.Q.R.[e]	13.5 mo.	16 mo.	5 mo.	9 mo.	8 mo.
	N	31	23	27	28	55
I.Q.[a]	Median	90	97	131	109	122
	I.Q.R.[e]	29.5	21.75	10.5	18	23
	N	28	23	25	27	52
Achieve-	Median	5.4	6.3	8.3	7.4	7.8
ment[b]	I.Q.R.[e]	2.2	1.84	.64	3.64	1.2
Parents'	N	34	12	28	25	53
Education	Median	12	11	16	16	16
(Years)[c]	I.Q.R.[e]	4	4	0	4	4
Parents'	N	28	21	25	27	52
Occupation	Median	18.5	8	78	51	68
Score[d]	I.Q.R.[e]	17	22.75	35.75	37	37

(continued)

(Table 1 continued)

Note: No significance figures have been computed because it is not intended that the data presented be generalized beyond the particular populations studied. See Robert L. Merton, G. G. Reader, and Patricia L. Kendall, eds. The Student Physician: Introductory Studies in the Sociology of Medical Education (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp.301-305; and H. C. Selvin, "A Critique of Tests of Significance in Survey Research," American Sociological Review, XXII, (1957), 519-527.

[a]Intelligence test scores were obtained from the California Test of Mental Maturity at Downtown and Briar Hill Schools and on the Hermon-Nelson Test of Mental Ability at Brookville School.

[b]Iowa Test of Basic Skills for all schools; however, the tests were administered in the fall at Downtown and Briar Hill Schools and the following spring at Brookville School, so it may be assumed that the Brookville scores are artificially inflated relative to the other two. Composite scores are presented here; only minor variations were noted in the score patterns on sub-tests.

[c]Years of education for the parent with more education.

[d]For the parent with the higher status occupation. Parental occupations were scored according to the Socioeconomic Index developed by Otis Dudley Duncan and presented in Albert J. Reiss, Jr., Occupations and Social Status (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

[e]Inter-Quartile Range

Notes

[1]More extensive and systematic reports of these data will be made later.

[2]It is interesting to note that pupil records at Briar Hill are virtually complete, while there are numerous gaps at both Downtown and Brookville. If one can assume that the gaps tend to represent less favorable scores (more frequent absences, inadequate information from the home, and the like), then the real differences may be greater than those reflected in Table 1.

[3]While Downtown and Brookville Schools each had only one sixth grade class, there were two sixth grades at Briar Hill. The class available for study turned out to represent a generally higher achieving group than did the other sixth grade, although there was some overlap. In view of this difference, background characteristics such as test scores and parental occupations presented in Table 1 are computed for each sixth grade separately as well as for all sixth graders. Conclusions should be drawn separately for the total group of suburban sixth graders and for the apparently particularly gifted group that was studied. Unfortunately, essays and observational data were not available for the second sixth grade class at Briar Hill.

[4]Parental occupations were scored according to the Socioeconomic Index developed by Otis Dudley Duncan and presented in Albert J. Reiss, Jr., Occupations and Social Status (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

[5]David E. Hunt and John Dopyera, "Personality Variation in Lower-Class Children," Journal of Psychology LXII (1966), 47-54.